

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

S E C R E T DJIBOUTI 000934

SIPDIS

STATE FOR AF

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/07/2014

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: PORTENTS IN DJIBOUTI BASE LEASE NEGOTIATIONS

REF: DJIBOUTI 903

Classified By: AMBASSADOR MARGUERITA D. RAGSDALE.
REASONS 1.4 (B) AND (D).

1. (S) During the July 6 meeting of the U.S.-Djibouti Military Coordinating Committee, Abdurahman Boreh, Special Economic Advisor to President Ismail Omar Guelleh, told USLO Chief that the Government of Djibouti would like to construct a new international airport. He said an American consulting firm was already under contract to do a preliminary study and to produce a master plan. This future airport, he continued, would benefit U.S. military forces. Essentially, the new airport would allow Djibouti to turn over its current international airport exclusively for military use. American, French, and Djiboutian military personnel would have complete control of the premises to enforce security and develop a runway that could meet all the services' needs. When USLO Chief pressed on financing possibilities for a new international airport, Boreh admitted that financing was currently lacking. However, he offered the view that Shaykh Mohamed (bin Rashid?) of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, owner of Emirates National Oil Company (ENOC) and Dubai Ports International (DPI), would finance a new passenger terminal if the Government of Djibouti could finance the new airport's runways, ramps and control tower.

2. (S) Intriguingly, Boreh stated that he hoped this time the U.S. military would "plan ahead" and "think seriously" about the opportunity that was before it, instead of making the same mistake that was made in 2002 when U.S. forces were offered Camp Lemonier, and all the land east to the sea, and turned it down. USLO explained to Boreh that no element of the Department of Defense could pay for or assist in the development of a civilian airport. Boreh smiled and said he was sure that some arrangement could be made during the upcoming negotiations for Camp Lemonier.

3. (S) By decree of President Guelleh, the U.S.-Djibouti military coordinating committee was established in October, 2003 to coordinate and facilitate U.S. military assistance to Djibouti. The committee consists of, besides Boreh, Major Patrick Anderson, Embassy Djibouti's USLO Chief, Mohamed Ali Hassan, Director of Bilateral Relations in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Lt.Col. Abdurahman Dembil, Presidential Defense Advisor, and Col. Osman Soubagleh, Director of International Relations, Djiboutian Army Headquarters. The committee meets weekly to discuss the status of security assistance programs and military issues in general. During the July 6 meeting, all members of the committee expressed the desire that a new access agreement between Djibouti and the United States for use of Camp Lemonier be comprehensive and cover all future U.S. requirements for security, logistical support and training.

4. (S) In other business at the July 6 meeting, Boreh sought USLO Chief's assistance in determining if the U.S. Navy had any concerns, or any additional requirements, following the June 30 tour by Captain Kurt Kunkel, N-4 of the Fifth Fleet, of the Port of Doraleh's construction site. During Capt. Kunkel's visit to the port, the length of the berth became a topic of discussion. The current Doraleh port project design calls for a berth of 210 meters with dolphin anchor points extending to 324 meters. Boreh asked USLO Chief if these dimensions would be sufficient to meet anticipated use of the berth by the U.S. Navy. (Note: Ambassador had requested the visit of a NAVCENT representative to Djibouti to tour the Doraleh site after she learned from Exxon-Mobil Corporation that the U.S. Navy had contracted, under DESC auspices, to lease four container storage tanks from ENOC for future fuel storage at Doraleh. End Note).

5. (S) Comment: Boreh's statement that Djibouti planned to build a new airport confirmed an earlier discussion Ambassador had with the Doraleh port site manager, K.K. Menon (strictly protect) on June 30. The informal "proposal" that the existing airport could be turned over for combined military use, if a new airport is built, was conveyed to USLO only days after post delivered its diplomatic note to Djibouti's Foreign Ministry informing the Government of the U.S.'s desire to re-negotiate agreements related to Camp Lemonier. Post believes that the Government of Djibouti may see base negotiations as a vehicle to help finance a new international airport in Djibouti. It will likely argue that,

while costly, a new airport would be in the best short and long-term interests of the U.S. End comment.
RAGSDALE